

A POSSIBLE DISCOVERY OF THE FIRST GENERATION LARVA OF *ETAINIA DECENTELLA* (HERRICH-SCHAFER, 1855). [LEPIDOPTERA: NEPTICULIDAE.]. — On April 12th., 1982, whilst collecting at Mark's Grave, Horseheath, Cambridgeshire (V.C. 29), I found a sycamore tree (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) from the base of which were growing several shoots, the tallest being about 2m high. I noticed that the buds on some of these shoots were much more retarded than on others, so I picked a sample for later examination. On a more detailed study, I found that the retarded bud was always the central one of a group, i.e. the prospective flower bud.

Two buds were dissected. In the first was a hole of diameter  $\frac{1}{2}$  mm (presumably the larval exit hole), and the bud had been eaten a little, though only in the most central part; there also appeared to be a mine in the bark of the twig just below the bud, but no egg could be found. There was no sign of spinning, which may indicate non-lepidopterous attack. (Hering suggests, in *The Biology of the Leaf-miners*, that the presence of silk is indicative of lepidopterous activity; it does not, however, follow that the absence of silk is indicative of non-lepidopterous activity). No larva could be found to confirm this. The second bud was similar, but signs of feeding were rather less clear. I kept the other buds in the hope of breeding something, but without success.

The life history of the first generation of *Etainia decentella* (as of all three British *Etainia*) has always been in doubt. The current position is most fully documented in a paper by Emmet and Johnson (*Ent. Rec.* 89: 257-264), where it is suggested that all three species feed in the samaras of their respective species of *Acer* in the autumn generation and in the buds in the spring generation. A particular point of similarity between *E. sericopeza* as there described and the material described above is that the larval feeding is confined to the flower buds. In addition, the inability to find an egg could be explained by its having been on the petiole of a leaf of the previous season: naturally, this would have fallen off by the spring.

Though I cannot claim to have found *E. decentella* as a spring larva, the evidence is suggestive. I write this note principally to encourage others to do what I shall do in March/April, 1983: search *Acer* buds in the hope of finally solving the problem of the spring generation of the *Etainia* species in Britain. — P. J. JOHNSON, 10, Crossfield Road, Hampstead, London, NW3 4NS., 10.ix.1982.

FURTHER NOTES ON AN INTRODUCED "COLONY" OF THE BLACK-VEINED WHITE: *APORIA CRATAEGI* L. IN SCOTLAND. — Further to my notes on this subject in *Ent. Rec.*, 89: 282-283, it may be of interest to record the current position here of the *Aporia crataegi* "colony" which has continued to the present time, although reinforced with "new blood" from the Swiss/Italian border in 1978.

The very fine weather at the end of May and early June caused the larvae that had pupated earliest to emerge as butterflies very early, the first few on the last two days of May. At one point there were literally dozens of them flying about, and I was able to pick up a lot of paired individuals, from which I shall hope to get a very big "crop" next year.

The problem was the abrupt change in the weather which occurred here on the 6th June. So many butterflies had mated that many had laid eggs in the wild, the first batch I saw on the 2nd June. At first, I thought the very cold weather over mid-summer had killed off some of the eggs, but this proved not to be the case; however, they took six weeks, plus or minus a few days to hatch. The tree on which the first batch was laid on 2nd June (a hawthorn) subsequently became almost peppered with eggs, the last being laid on the 21st July, which hatched on the 18th August. This would be on account of the warm period we had here covering roughly the last ten days of July and the first half of August. All the earlier eggs that were kept in the summerhouse took five weeks to hatch.

I have had more time this year to study the habits of the butterflies and their interaction with the rest of the fauna. Particularly when there are a lot around, they are very often heavily persecuted by local birds, but it is always the same birds that do the predating; this year a blackbird, a song-thrush and a great-tit. A pair of spotted flycatchers left them alone. The butterflies have a curious habit of alighting in groups for the night, and are often very conspicuous, particularly the males; the females on the other hand seem to become semi-transparent after a short time flying, and soon look markedly different from the other Pierids. Both sexes are strongly attracted to Rhododendron and Rose-bay Willowherb. In the past, I was convinced the males mated only once, but I have evidence that at least two males mated twice. The foodplant mostly selected is hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) followed by the apple trees in my orchard. One or two batches have been laid on a group of trees I cannot classify; these grow wild from fallen fruit and produce somewhat tasteless plums like damsons but the wrong colour. This year I found a batch of eggs for the first time on Mountain Ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*). These insects will eat things I suspect the eggs are never laid on, e.g. quince (*Cydonia*) and even the evergreen *Prunus lusitanica*.

Although last winter's experiment proved that the insect can successfully come through the Scottish winter, at least to the extent of about 65% survival rate of those tried, the experiment involved protection by a strawberry net to keep out insectivorous birds. Incidentally, a larva given to Dr. Shaw of the Royal Scottish Museum parasitised by *Apanteles glomeratus* proved to be the only one so affected, with the remaining 38 all producing butterflies. — R. ELLIOTT, "Burbank", North Road, Saline Fife, 20.viii.82.

A SIGHTING OF *AGRION VIRGO* (LINN.) (ODONATA: AGRIIDAE) IN CENTRAL LONDON. — On the morning of the 4th of September 1982 a solitary male of this species was seen flying south along Queensway W2, towards Kensington Gardens (Nat. Grid Ref. TQ259807). The specimen concerned must have strayed some distance from its breeding site, as the larvae are usually found in swift flowing gravel streams. To my knowledge no such habitat exists in this area of London. — A. P. FOSTER, c/o Nature Conservancy Council, 19-20 Belgrave Square, London, SW1X 8PY.